(iv) Self-employment is promoted through the following:—

(a) Allotment of vending stalls, kiosks an shops by some State Govts./UTs;

(b) Loans from Nationalised Banks at concessional Rates of Interest;

(c) Preference in allotment of Public Telephone booths;

(d) Reservation in distribution of Petrol Pumps, Kerosence Depots etc.

(7) *Scheme of Assistance to disabled for purchase/fitting of Aids/Appliances*

The main objective of the scheme is to assist needy physically handicapped persons in procurring durable, sophisticated the scientifically manufactured aids and appliances that promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation. The scheme is implemented through Centres run by the Companies, registered under Companies Act, registered Societies, trusts or any other institutions recognised by the Ministry of Welfare. Both governmental and non-governmental agencies are thus engaged for the implementation of the scheme.

Under the scheme, aids and appliances upto value of Rs. 3600/- are distributed to the disabled persons free of cost if their monthly income is upto Rs. 1200/- and at 50% or the cost if the income is between Rs. 1201 to Rs. 2500/-.

(8) Government of India have recently enacted "The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995". The Act provides prevention and early detection of disabilities, education, employment non-discrimination etc. for disabled persons including mentally handicapped persons.

(9) National Handicapped Finance & Development Corpn. is being set up to provide an additional channel of finance at concessional rates to enable the handicapped persons to take up self-employment projects.

Lock-out in Patriot Newspaper

778. SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether newspaper 'Patriot' is under lock-out;

(b) if so, the effective date of such lock-out with reasons therefor;

(c) whether such lock-out exercise in the 'Patriot' newspaper has been activised several times by management in past too;

(d) if so, the details of such lock-out in chronological order since establishment of the organisation;

(e) whether Government propose to ask existing group of newspapers of the country to take over management of 'Patriot' newspaper to resolve the crisis of repeated lock-out;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, w.e.f. 14.6.1996, the newspaper 'Patriot' is under lock-out due to financial crisis.

(c) As per information available, no lock-out has been declared by the management in the last two years.

(d) In view of the above, question does not arise.

(e) No such proposal is under consideration.

(f) and (g) Does not arise in view of (e) above.

Modernising rescue services in coal mines

779. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rescue services in coal mines have not been modernised so far;